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FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2366  
INFO AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
AMCONSUL NAPLES  
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
AMCONSUL FLORENCE  
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMCONSUL MILAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ROME 009630

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SUBJECT: LIBYA: QADHAFI HOPES IN ITALY'S LEFTISTS

REF: ROME 9519

SUMMARY

1. THE ITALIAN PRESS CONTINUES TO REPORT ON LIBYA, CITING QADHAFI AS SAYING OCTOBER 29 HE BELIEVES ITALY'S LEFTIST GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH APPROVING INDEMNITY PAYMENTS TO LIBYA AS COMPENSATION FOR ITALIAN COLONIAL DAMAGES. THREE PROMINENT FIGURES, FORMERLY MEMBERS OF THE THEN-ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) RESPONDED PUBLICLY AND POSITIVELY TO QADHAFI'S REQUESTS: ACHILLE OCCHETTO, PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES' FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, FORMER PCI LEADER, AND CURRENTLY A MEMBER OF THE LEADING GOVERNING PARTY, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE LEFT (PDS); RINO SERRI, MFA UNDER SECRETARY, FORMERLY OF THE PCI AND NOW A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING COALITION'S UNITARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY; AND VALENTINO PARLATO, EDITOR OF THE LEFTIST DAILY "IL MANIFESTO." HOWEVER, SENATOR JAS GAWRONSKI OF THE CENTER-RIGHT'S FORZA ITALIA SAID LIBYA CAN NORMALIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY "ONLY IF IT COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND COOPERATES POSITIVELY IN FINDING A SOLUTION ON LOCKERBIE." A DELEGATION OF RELATIVES OF LIBYANS DEPORTED DURING ITALY'S OCCUPATION VISITED ITALY AT THE END OF OCTOBER AND SUBMITTED A LIST OF REQUESTS TO THE GOI. UNIDENTIFIED ITALIAN MFA SOURCES TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE SIGNING OF AN ITALIAN-LIBYAN AGREEMENT "IS GETTING CLOSER."  
END SUMMARY.

QADHAFI CALLS ON THE ITALIAN LEFT

2. FOLLOWING LIBYA'S "NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING" IN COMMEMORATION OF THE MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND LIBYANS QADHAFI CLAIMS WERE DEPORTED TO ITALY ON OCTOBER 26, 1911, THE ITALIAN NEWS SERVICE ANSA REPORTED THAT QADHAFI OCTOBER 29 SAID HE HOPED THE NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD SETTLE THE CONTROVERSY OVER COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES PROVOKED BY ITALY DURING ITALY'S OCCUPATION OF LIBYA (1911-1943). SPECIFICALLY, QADHAFI SAID, "INDEMNITY PAYMENTS SHOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM TO THE COMMUNISTS AND THE LEFT NOW IN GOVERNMENT IN ITALY. IT IS TIME TO TURN OVER A DARK PAGE, START COOPERATING, AND FORGET THE UGLY PAST. IF WE GET COMPENSATION, WE PROMISE WE WILL GIVE ITALY TRUE FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION." HE ALSO SAID HE BELIEVES ITALY "WILL SUPPORT LIBYA'S POSITION ON LOCKERBIE, AS WILL OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES."

#### OCCHETTO SAYS ITALIAN COLONIALISM "A BLEMISH"

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13. QADHAFI SEEMED TO BE RESPONDING TO STATEMENTS BY ACHILLE OCCHETTO, PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES' FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (AND FORMER ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER). INTERVIEWED ON ITALIAN NATIONAL RADIO THE PREVIOUS DAY, OCCHETTO HAD STRESSED THE "TIES BETWEEN THE TWO SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN" AND COMMENTED POSITIVELY ON THE GOI'S EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH LIBYA (REFTEL). ACCORDING TO OCCHETTO, QADHAFI'S REPEATED REQUESTS FOR INDEMNITY PAYMENTS APPEAR TO BE "EXAGGERATED." HOWEVER, OCCHETTO SAID, ITALIAN COLONIALISM WAS A "BLEMISH [ON ITALY'S PAST]. IT WAS ITALY'S MISTAKE, AND ITALY MUST RECOGNIZE IT." OCCHETTO DID NOT SEEM TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE U.S. DISCONTENT OVER ITALY'S EFFORTS. HE SAID, "THE POLICY OF DIALOGUE WITH COUNTRIES OVER WHICH THE U.S. HAS PLACED SOME SORT OF VETO CAN BE MUCH MORE USEFUL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY THAN THE POLICY OF ISOLATION."

#### SERRI SAYS QADHAFI'S REQUESTS ARE "LEGITIMATE"

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14. QADHAFI'S REQUESTS RECEIVED POSITIVE, PUBLIC RESPONSES FROM TWO OTHER AUTHORITATIVE ITALIAN NEO-COMMUNISTS -- ONE OF WHOM, RINO SERRI, IS CURRENTLY UNDER SECRETARY AT THE MFA. IN AN OPEN LETTER IN THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST DAILY "IL MANIFESTO" NOVEMBER 2, SERRI CHARACTERIZED QADHAFI'S REQUEST FOR ITALY'S CONDEMNATION OF ITS COLONIAL PERIOD AS "LEGITIMATE," ADDING THAT ITALY SHOULD "REMOVE EVERY VESTIGE OF ITS COLONIAL PAST IN LIBYA." ACCORDING TO SERRI, "ITALY MUST CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR LIBYA TO COME OUT OF ITS ISOLATION" THROUGH THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP, WHICH, HE SAID, "CANNOT GROW WITHOUT LIBYA'S FULL PARTICIPATION." HE NOTED THAT "MEDITERRANEAN PEACE, SECURITY, AND PROGRESS" ARE INCREASINGLY BECOMING ISSUES REQUIRING FULL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND UNDERScoreD LIBYA'S STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION, INCLUDING ITS CALL FOR ARAB UNIFICATION AGAINST ISLAMIC TERRORISM. SERRI SAID ITALIAN PM PRODI'S CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN WORKING SINCE SUMMER 1996 TO "BEGIN A NEW AND POSITIVE PERIOD IN LIBYAN-ITALIAN RELATIONS." ACCORDING TO SERRI, "THIS IS THE WAY TO MAKE IT EASIER ONE DAY TO OVERCOME" THE U.N. EMBARGO AGAINST LIBYA, "WHICH ALL OF US SHOULD HOPE WILL NOT LAST TOO MUCH LONGER." SERRI'S COMMENT WAS IN REPLY TO AN OPEN LETTER IN THE SAME PAPER OCTOBER 31 BY VALENTINO PARLATO, "MANIFESTO" EDITOR AND POLITICAL COMMENTATOR (AND A NATIVE OF TRIPOLI), WHO ENCOURAGED SERRI "TO REACH A PEACEFUL SOLUTION WITH ITALY'S FORMER COLONY."

#### FORZA ITALIA SAYS REMEMBER LOCKERBIE

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15. QADHAFI'S REQUESTS SPARKED A DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE REACTION FROM JAS GAWRONSKI, CENTER-RIGHT FORZA ITALIA'S GROUP LEADER AT THE SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. ACCORDING TO GAWRONSKI, LIBYA CAN NORMALIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY "ONLY IF IT COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND COOPERATES POSITIVELY IN FINDING A SOLUTION ON LOCKERBIE." IF THE GOI WERE TO IGNORE THE ABOVE, GAWRONSKI SAID, IT WOULD "OPEN A VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD IN ITALY'S

TRADITIONAL RELATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S.  
AND WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE ALWAYS  
STRUGGLED AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND ITS  
RAMIFICATIONS."

LIBYAN DELEGATION IN ITALY  
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¶6. THE PRESS OCTOBER 28-29 ALSO REPORTED THE  
LATE-OCTOBER YEARLY VISIT TO ITALY BY A  
DELEGATION OF RELATIVES OF THOSE LIBYANS WHO WERE  
ALLEGEDLY DEPORTED HERE, AND THEIR YEARLY  
REQUESTS TO THE GOI FOR:

- MAPS INDICATING THE PLACEMENT OF  
ANTI-PERSONNEL LAND MINES;
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO REMOVE THE LAND MINES;
- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO WERE INJURED  
OR CRIPPLED BY LAND MINE EXPLOSIONS; AND
- COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES.

GOI READYING ITALY-LIBYA AGREEMENT  
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¶7. ACCORDING TO THE PROVOCATIVE, CLASSICAL  
LIBERAL DAILY "IL FOGLIO" OCTOBER 31 AND NOVEMBER  
6, UNIDENTIFIED ITALIAN MFA SOURCES SAID THAT THE  
SIGNING OF AN ITALIAN-LIBYAN BILATERAL AGREEMENT  
(THAT WILL ALSO SETTLE PENDING COLONIAL ISSUES)  
"IS GETTING CLOSER." ACCORDING TO "IL FOGLIO,"  
THE AGREEMENT WOULD OPEN THE WAY FOR  
"CONSIDERABLE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ENERGY AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS, BUT WOULD MOST CERTAINLY  
PROVOKE U.S. RESENTMENT." THIS NOTWITHSTANDING,  
"IL FOGLIO" NOTED THAT UNIDENTIFIED GOI SOURCES  
INDICATED THAT ITALY "WANTS TO MOVE THE SAME WAY  
AS FRANCE DID IN IRAN WITH ITS 'TOTAL'  
MAXI-CONTRACT."

CUNNINGHAM